



The Role of Sosial, and Emotional Learning (SEL) in Improving Student Wellbeing and Academic Success

Khoirun Nisa^{1✉}, Abdullah²

^{1,2} Universitas Nurul Jadid, East Java, Indonesia

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✉ Correspondence

2352600009@unuja.ac.id

Abstract:

This research focuses on the role of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in improving students' mental well-being and academic performance. The main objective of this study is to understand how the implementation of Social-Emotional Learning programs can affect students' emotional states and educational outcomes. Evaluate the extent to which the Social-Emotional Learning program can help students manage stress, anxiety, and depression, and improve academic performance. The research method used is a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation and in-depth interviews with the head of madrasah, teachers, curriculum deputy head, student guardians, and students. Data analysis was done thematically to identify the main themes related to the effects of the Social-Emotional Learning program. The results showed that the Social-Emotional Learning program significantly improved students' mental well-being, which had a positive impact on motivation, learning focus, and academic achievement. In addition, students involved in Social-Emotional Learning programs can better recognize and manage emotions, which can reduce stress and anxiety levels. The implications of this study emphasize the importance of integrating Social-Emotional Learning programs into the education curriculum to create a more inclusive learning environment that supports student development and achieves holistic and comprehensive education outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

The integration of Social, and Emotional Learning (SEL) into the school curriculum not only supports students' personal development but also contributes to academic achievement and creates a healthier and more productive learning environment. Social, and Emotional Learning (SEL) helps students develop essential social and emotional skills, such as empathy, stress management, and self-control. These skills are not only important for positive social interactions but also for dealing with emotional challenges in everyday life. According to a report from Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), students who received SEL education showed significant improvements in academic performance, interpersonal relationships, and

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emotional well-being (Nie, n.d.). Thus, emotional intelligence, which is at the core of SEL, plays an important role in determining one's life success. In line with Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (Yerizon 2023) which states that interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence are as important as logical-mathematical and linguistic intelligence.

This research includes an in-depth analysis of how Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) can improve students' well-being and academic success. Previous research, (Martinsone et al. 2022) showed that Social and Emotional Learning programs have significant positive impacts such as improvements in social skills, reduction in behavioral problems, and academic achievement. This research emphasizes the importance of continuous and integrated implementation of SEL programs in the school curriculum. (Sandilos et al. 2023) said that consistently implemented SEL programs can enhance positive learning environments and support student well-being. (Green et al. 2021) found that the effectiveness of SEL programs is often influenced by the context of implementation, including support from schools, teacher training, and family involvement. In addition, (Goforth et al. 2024) revealed that in the effectiveness of SEL programs in various cultural contexts, there are differences in implementation, but the basic principles of SEL can be adapted and provide benefits in various cultural backgrounds. Meanwhile, (Cipriano et al. 2023) said that the implementation of SEL programs in school and cultural contexts must be tailored to the specific needs and characteristics of students and schools to be more effective.

From some of the research findings, the novelty of the research lies in how SEL programs can be adapted and implemented in various cultural and social contexts. Most of the previous studies have focused on the benefits of SEL programs in the context of education in developed countries, while few have explored how SEL can be implemented and adapted in developing countries with high cultural diversity. This research introduces a new approach that rests on an interdisciplinary approach that combines theories of social-emotional development with local cultural approaches, thus providing new and more comprehensive insights into the implementation of SEL in developing countries. It also identifies factors that influence the effectiveness of SEL programs in different environments, including the role of support from schools, teacher training, and family involvement.

With this, the research objectives focus on how to implement SEL strategies that are more effective and appropriate to different cultural and social contexts, as well as enrich the academic literature on Social, and Emotional Learning (SEL) in developing countries. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the academic literature as well as have a real practical impact on the field of education. This research argues that SEL programs can improve empathy, self-management, and responsible decision-making skills. Effective implementation of SEL will result in similar improvements in the students studied (LaBelle 2023; Steed 2022; Faiz et al., 2023). This research confirms that the SEL program will reduce stress levels and improve students' emotional well-being. Good emotional well-being is essential to create a conducive learning environment (Fitzgerald et al. 2022) (Eloff 2023). In addition, family involvement and school support will increase the effectiveness of the SEL program which can strengthen the success of the SEL program (Gimbert et al. 2023) (Hoskins 2024). This allows SEL programs to be implemented more effectively in various cultural

and social contexts. Furthermore, it can provide practical solutions for educators and policymakers to holistically improve student well-being and academic success (Soutter 2023) (Datnow et al. 2022). This research seeks to demonstrate that social-emotional learning is an educational strategy that benefits all parties and is an important step toward realizing equitable and quality education.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach of case study type. This approach was chosen because the purpose of this research is to analyze how social-emotional learning can improve students' well-being and academic success at MI Raudlatus Shibyan Plampang. This approach allows researchers to explore the perspectives and subjective experiences of the various parties involved. The site of this research is MI Raudlatus Shibyan Plampang, to deeply understand how social-emotional learning can improve students' well-being and academic success.

MI Raudlatus Shibyan Plampang was chosen as the research site for the title "The Role of Social-Emotional Learning in Improving Student Wellbeing and Academic Success" because it has demonstrated a strong commitment to social-emotional learning. The school not only has policies that support academics but have also implemented various programs to ensure that all students, can learn together in a supportive environment. In addition, MI Raudlatus Shibyan Plampang has a team of educators who are trained and experienced in handling students' social culture and emotions, as well as adequate facilities to support the social-emotional learning process. The experiences and good practices in MI Raudlatus Shibyan Plampang are expected to provide valuable insights and become a model for other schools that want to develop similar social-emotional learning programs.

Participants were selected using a purposive technique, which is a determination that is chosen with certain considerations and objectives. The reason for using this technique is that researchers need data in the form of information that can only be obtained from informants who certainly have more knowledge about the data that researchers want to get, to produce data that is by expectations and relevant to the predetermined title. This study involved 7 participants consisting of the Head of the Madrasah, Deputy Head of Student Affairs, Deputy Head of Curriculum, Deputy Head of Infrastructure Facilities, Counseling Guidance, Teachers, Students, and Guardians of Students. Among the informants, there were different positions, educational backgrounds, and genders, which were expected to provide accurate information on the research themes. The selected participants met certain criteria, i.e. they were familiar with religious moderation and ensuring diverse representation across different stakeholder groups, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the dynamics of how social-emotional learning capabilities can improve student well-being and academic success.

Table : 1 Research Participants

Participant	Gender		Informant
	Male	Female	
Head of Madrasah	1	-	Rustam Supriyanto, M.Pd
Deputy Head of student	-	1	Sri Wahyuni, S.Pd
Deputy Head of curriculum	-	1	Elok Basyiroh M, S.Pd
Counseling guidance	1	-	M. Satino, S.Pd
Teacher	-	1	Lilis Hidayati, S.Pd
Student	1	-	Ahmad Akiful Islam
Student guardian	-	1	Riska Afkarina Karimah

The interview technique used in this research is a semi-structured interview technique, which means that there are interview guidelines, although there are interviews outside the guidelines. At the beginning of each interview, the researcher introduced herself and provided an overview of the interview topic. To improve accuracy and thorough documentation, an agreement was made with the participants to record the interviews. These recorded sessions, along with the accompanying transcripts, served as valuable sources for careful analysis and interpretation in this study. The researcher prepared some questions relevant to the research theme as semi-structured interviews. The questions were designed to explore the extent to which social-emotional learning can enhance students' well-being and academic success.

Based on the interview transcripts, the researcher identified themes that were in line with the research objectives. This process involved identifying themes in the interview data by thoroughly reviewing the interview transcripts several times until the researcher had a clear picture of how social-emotional learning can improve students' well-being and academic success. Following the interviews, the researcher assured the participants that the recorded interviews would be kept confidential. The research interview protocol was important in helping to guide the semi-structured in-depth interviews with the participants. The semi-structured design offers a balance between flexibility and an established framework, allowing researchers to delve deeply into a particular subject while keeping an open mind to unexpected outcomes. The protocol served as a methodological framework, which ensured uniformity of data collection procedures during the interviews and enabled the investigation of key themes regarding the phenomenon of Social, and Emotional Learning (SEL) enhancing students' well-being and academic success.

Miles and Huberman's (1994) qualitative data analysis technique involves four steps, starting with the formulation of clear research objectives (Köhler 2024). This research aims to analyze how social-emotional learning can improve students' well-being and academic success. The initial stage of data analysis includes collecting research data obtained through the observation and interview process and documentation as research records. The second step in data reduction is to summarize, select key elements, and focus on important data that are aligned with the research themes. This careful data reduction process aims to present a clear and concise picture of radicalism in rural areas. Furthermore, the third step involves presenting the data through narrative text. The final step in the data analysis process involves drawing research conclusions based on data reduction. These conclusions were carefully crafted to synthesize the data collected. Data validity was ensured through a process of data triangulation and review, which ensured consistency with the research findings. To ensure the

accuracy of the data collected, source triangulation was conducted by cross-referencing information from theories and previous studies related to Social, and Emotional Learning (SEL) can improve students' well-being and academic success.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results showed that the implementation of Social, and Emotional Learning (SEL) in MI Raudlatus Shibyan significantly improved students' emotional well-being and academic success. This finding is in line with a study (Ushkuntaeva 2024) which showed that SEL programs improve students' social and emotional skills, including empathy, self-management, and responsible decision-making. In addition, this study also found that family involvement and school support play an important role in the effectiveness of SEL programs, which is supported by the findings of (Hayashi et al. 2022) which showed that support from the surrounding environment reinforced the positive impact of SEL on students' academic performance and participation. However, this study also identified some challenges, such as limited teacher training and lack of resources, which became barriers to the implementation of SEL programs. This is in contrast to research (Beard 2023) which found that SEL programs effectively reduce stress and improve students' emotional well-being when supported by adequate training and sufficient resources. Thus, this study highlights the importance of holistic support and adequate training for educators to overcome challenges in SEL implementation and maximize its benefits for students' well-being and academic achievement.

Social and Emotional Skills

The Social, and Emotional Learning (SEL) program has an important role in developing skills such as empathy, stress management, and self-control as well as social interaction and emotional challenges. As stated by Rustam Supriyanto the Head of Madrasah, "The SEL program is very effective in helping students manage stress. Students learn stress management techniques that help them stay calm and focused, even in challenging situations. In addition, students also feel more confident in facing stressful exams and assignments, having been trained to deal with pressure healthily. The program also facilitates group discussions that encourage students to share experiences and support each other, further strengthening their emotional resilience. Sri Wahyuni the Head of student stated that "Through the SEL program, students can develop empathy skills, which enable them to better understand and respond to their peers' feelings positively. In addition, students learn to listen better and provide necessary emotional support, which creates a more harmonious and inclusive classroom atmosphere. This process also helps them build stronger relationships with fellow students, strengthening mutual trust and cooperation within the classroom." Lilis Hidayati the teacher said that the implementation of the SEL program significantly helped students in developing important skills such as empathy, stress management, and self-control. These skills are crucial for forming positive and effective social interactions. In addition, students become better able to cope with various emotional challenges in daily life, so that they can focus and perform better in school. We also see that these skills improve relationships between students and teachers, creating a more supportive and

productive learning environment for all parties involved.

The informants' statements above show that the Social, and Emotional Learning (SEL) program has a significant impact on the way students manage stress and face challenges. The program provides stress management techniques that help students stay calm and focused even in stressful situations. These techniques, such as relaxation strategies or breathing techniques, enable students to cope effectively with stress, which supports mental well-being. Furthermore, effective stress management contributes to students' increased self-confidence. As students feel more capable of dealing with stressful exams and assignments, it shows that students not only learn how to manage emotions but also feel more prepared and confident in challenging academic situations. Self-confidence is important as it can improve academic performance and reduce anxiety which often affects student learning outcomes. SEL programs also integrate group discussions as an important component. These discussions not only allow students to share personal experiences but also build a network of support between each other. This kind of interaction strengthens students' emotional resilience, as they feel supported and connected to their classmates. By sharing and discussing challenges, students can gain new perspectives and additional strategies to cope with stress, which strengthens students' ability to cope with future difficulties. Overall, this statement emphasizes that SEL programs not only focus on developing students' skills but also on creating a community of support that enhances students' emotional resilience and academic performance.



Figure 1. Social-Emotional Learning Program

The figure above shows that there are four main components in the SEL program to develop and apply students' social and emotional skills. First Self-Management focuses on students' ability to regulate emotions, thoughts, and behaviours such as setting goals, managing stress, and maintaining motivation. Second Social Awareness teaches students to understand and appreciate others' perspectives, show empathy, and recognize social dynamics in different groups. Third Relationship Skills, this aspect teaches skills to build and maintain healthy and beneficial relationships. Students learn effective communication, cooperation, conflict resolution, and seeking help when needed. Fourthly Self-Awareness, this component emphasizes self-knowledge, including understanding

personal emotions, strengths, and limitations. Social skills include abilities that help students interact effectively and positively, such as empathy which allows students to relate to friends emotionally. Where students can work together to support the development of teamwork and collaboration. In addition, there are interpersonal skills that help in creating a supportive social environment. Meanwhile, emotional skills focus on students' ability to manage and understand their own emotions. This allows students to overcome impulsivity which supports self-reflection and personal development as well as being responsible in making decisions.

Social, and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs play a crucial role in the development of students' social and emotional skills, which have a significant impact on students' mental well-being and academic success. Through the application of social skills such as empathy, effective communication, cooperation, and interpersonal skills, students learn to interact positively and productively with others (Ayasrah et al. 2022; Hidayah 2023). These skills support the creation of harmonious relationships and an inclusive social environment, which in turn improves the learning climate at school (Xu 2024) (Baharun et al. 2022). On the emotional side, SEL programs help students manage and understand emotions better through emotion management, self-control, self-awareness, and decision-making (Rubab et al. 2024) (Setiawati 2023). These skills enable students to face emotional challenges more effectively, reduce stress, and increase self-confidence (Wicaksono 2024) (Saleha 2022). Relaxation exercises and group discussions that are part of the SEL teaching method serve to strengthen students' emotional resilience, providing the necessary support to cope with daily stresses and challenges (Vestad 2022) (Muhith et al. 2023). Thus, the social and emotional skills developed through SEL programs not only influence students' ability to function in social and academic settings but also contribute to the establishment of a positive and supportive learning atmosphere. By improving mental well-being and self-confidence, as well as creating a more harmonious environment, SEL programs are instrumental in preparing students for long-term success both within and beyond the educational context.

Mental Wellbeing and Academic Performance

Based on the interview with the principal, social-emotional learning provides students with tools to manage stress and emotions, which in turn helps students concentrate and perform better in school. This shows that the SEL program is an effective tool to increase student motivation and engagement in the learning process. As explained by Sri Wahyuni the Head of student, "The SEL program that we implement has a significant positive impact on students' mental well-being. We see that students involved in this program show a decrease in stress and anxiety levels. This is very important because good mental well-being is directly related to their academic performance. Students who feel calmer and emotionally balanced tend to be more focused and motivated in their studies, which ultimately improves their academic grades. In addition, they are also better able to cope with academic pressure and face challenges with confidence." Elok Basyiroh the head of the curriculum said "With good self-management skills,

students tend to be more motivated and engaged in learning. We see that they are more excited and active in following the lessons.

Good emotional management is also very helpful for students in coping with stress related to academic tasks and exams. They become calmer and able to deal with pressure better, which improves their academic results." Lilis Hidayati the teacher said "The SEL program provides tools for students to recognize and manage their emotions, which is very helpful in reducing levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. Research shows that students involved in SEL programs tend to have better academic performance. The social-emotional skills they develop help them to be more focused, motivated, and ready to learn. In addition, we also see that they are more disciplined in doing their assignments and more confident in facing difficult problems. This program not only helps them academically but also builds a more resilient character. Students become more independent and motivated to achieve their goals."

The informants' statements above indicate that social-emotional learning (SEL) programs have a very positive impact on students' academic performance and personal development. SEL programs provide students with effective tools to recognize and manage emotions, which significantly helps reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. Research supports that engagement in SEL programs improves academic performance as the social-emotional skills developed make students more focused, motivated, and ready to learn. These skills also contribute to improved discipline in completing tasks and confidence in facing academic challenges. This shows that the SEL program not only improves academic achievement but also shapes students' character to become more resilient and resilient, making students more independent and motivated to achieve their desired goals. In addition, the SEL program also affects students' communication and conflict resolution skills and its impact on classroom atmosphere and academic achievement.

Students become more open in expressing their feelings, which shows improvement in interpersonal communication skills. Furthermore, students also demonstrated a better ability to resolve conflicts among peers, which contributed to a more harmonious classroom atmosphere conducive to learning. Students also found it easier to talk about their problems, both academic and personal. This suggests that the SEL program helps students develop listening and empathy skills, which enable students to understand the feelings of others and work together to find solutions. This more supportive and inclusive learning environment not only improves students' emotional well-being but also has a positive impact on academic achievement. With a harmonious classroom atmosphere, students can focus better on learning, which in turn improves their academic achievement. Thus, SEL programs play an important role in developing students holistically, both academically and personally.

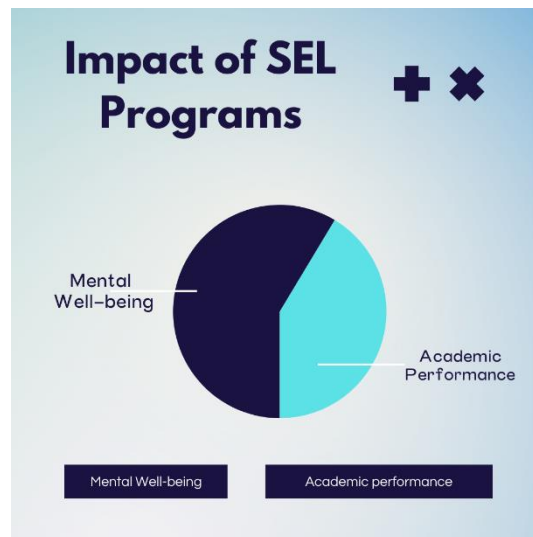


Figure 2. Impact of SEL programs

The chart above shows that SEL programs not only help in the academic aspect but also the mental well-being of students. Good mental well-being is a prerequisite for optimal academic performance. By helping students manage emotions and reduce stress, SEL programs create a more positive and productive learning environment. Through the skills taught in SEL programs, students learn to recognize and manage emotions. Students' ability to manage their emotions influences how they deal with everyday challenges, both inside and outside the school environment. This is an important foundation for effective and productive learning to support improved student well-being. In addition, by improving social-emotional skills, SEL programs also shape students' characters to be more resilient, independent, and ready to face various challenges such as students' academic achievement. Students involved in SEL programs are more focused, motivated, and ready to learn. The social-emotional skills developed through this program, such as self-management, empathy, and communication skills, help students to be more disciplined in doing assignments and more confident in facing difficult problems. As a result, students can cope better with academic pressure, which in turn improves academic outcomes. Therefore, the integration of SEL programs in the educational curriculum is a very important step to achieve more holistic outcomes in students' education.

Social-emotional learning (SEL) programs have a significant positive impact on students' mental well-being and academic performance. Improved mental well-being indicates that students' ability to recognize and manage emotions helps reduce stress, anxiety, and depression (Labrague 2022) (Mukaffan et al. 2023). A healthier mental environment can support students in better dealing with daily challenges, both in and out of school. Furthermore, the improved academic performance reflects that the social-emotional skills taught in the SEL program, such as self-management, empathy, and communication,

make students more focused, motivated, and ready to learn (Khalid 2023) (Hamimah 2022). With the ability to manage academic pressure effectively, students become more disciplined and confident in completing assignments and facing exams. It can be concluded that SEL programs not only support academic achievement but also students' mental well-being, forming a more resilient and independent character (Niu 2024) (Husna 2023). The integration of SEL programs into the educational curriculum is crucial to creating a positive and productive learning environment and achieving holistic and comprehensive educational outcomes (Thierry et al. 2022). Thus, SEL programs play an important role in preparing students for academic and personal success.

Positive Learning Environment

The SEL program helps reduce the incidence of problematic behavior and increases mutual respect among students, which can create an atmosphere conducive to learning. As conveyed by Rustam Supriyanto the Head of the Madrasah stated "We saw a decrease in the incidence of problematic behavior after implementing the SEL program. Students are now better able to control their emotions and interact with their peers more positively. They also learn strategies to manage anger and frustration, which greatly reduces conflict in the classroom. In addition, students seek help from teachers or counselors more often when facing problems, which creates a safer and more supportive learning environment." Lilis Hidayati the teacher added "Our class is now quieter and students are more focused on the lesson because they learn to respect each other. In addition, the SEL program also teaches them to listen with empathy and resolve conflicts constructively. Students have become more engaged in class discussions and are better equipped to work together on group projects. This greatly improves the overall classroom dynamics and has a positive impact on their academic performance." Ahmad Akiful Islam one of the students said "I feel more comfortable at school because my friends are nicer and more supportive. We have learned how to communicate well and understand each other's feelings through the SEL program. This makes the school environment more inclusive and friendly. Also, when there are problems, we can solve them together in a constructive way. I feel more motivated and confident to face academic and social challenges."

Based on the informants' statements above, the implementation of the Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) program has had a significant positive impact on student behavior, which has successfully created a calmer and more focused classroom environment. There is a decrease in the incidence of problematic behavior in the classroom, indicating that students are better able to control their emotions. Students demonstrate more positive interactions with their classmates, as well as using the strategies taught to manage anger and frustration, which

were previously frequent triggers for conflict. In addition, students become more proactive in seeking help from teachers or counselors when facing problems. This creates a safer and more supportive learning environment, where students feel supported and more comfortable learning. The SEL program not only helps in improving academic performance but also plays an important role in shaping a harmonious classroom atmosphere that is conducive to students' emotional and social development. The social-emotional skills developed through SEL programs also make students more engaged in class discussions and better equipped to work together on group projects. This shows an improvement in classroom dynamics, which creates a more collaborative and harmonious learning atmosphere. Consequently, students' academic performance also improved as they felt more emotionally supported and more motivated to actively participate in teaching and learning activities. The SEL program thus not only improved students' social behavior but also contributed positively to their academic performance.



Figure 3. Positive SEL Program

Based on the figure above, shows that the implementation of the SEL program is not only beneficial in improving students' academic performance but also in shaping behavior and social skills to strengthen mental well-being and create a more positive learning environment. The SEL program provides students with the skills to recognize and manage emotions, be better able to deal with academic and social pressures as seen from the calmer classroom atmosphere, and students who are more focused on following lessons. Furthermore, increased intrinsic motivation is seen in students' engagement in class activities and willingness to participate in group discussions and projects. In addition, the program encourages students to cooperate better, both in resolving conflicts between friends and in group tasks, thus creating a more harmonious and inclusive classroom environment.

The implementation of the Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) program significantly contributed to the creation of a more harmonious classroom environment conducive to students' academic and emotional development. The SEL program successfully reduces stress and anxiety levels among students, which results in increased focus and motivation in learning (Bai 2024). In addition, with the social-emotional skills developed, students can manage emotions, reduce the incidence of problematic behaviors, and increase collaboration between friends (Guo et al. 2023). This contributes to a more positive classroom dynamic, promoting better academic performance and higher mental well-being (Ling et al. 2022). Thus, a positive learning environment supported by the SEL program, not only improves learning outcomes but also shapes students into more resilient, empathetic, and competitive individuals.

CONCLUSION

The results show that the Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) program has a positive impact on students' mental well-being and academic performance. Through the development of skills such as empathy, stress management, and self-control, students showed improvements in focus, motivation, and ability to interact positively with peers. A more harmonious and conducive learning environment also plays a role in reducing the incidence of problematic behaviour, which can support better academic performance. Overall, the implementation of the SEL program has successfully shaped students into more resilient, disciplined individuals who are ready to face academic and emotional challenges.

In future research, it is suggested that the scope of SEL programs be expanded to include a more in-depth approach to measuring the long-term impact on students' mental well-being and academic performance. Further research could also focus on analyzing how SEL programs can be integrated with other curricula, as well as the impact on groups of students with different socio-economic backgrounds. In addition, further exploration of the role of teachers and parents in supporting the implementation of SEL programs is also important to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of SEL programs in various educational contexts.

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